(b) the amount of revenue earned by such exports so far?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) The Khadi and Village Industries Commission, a statutory organisation under the Government of India, does not directly undertake any exports.

(b) Does not arise.

Functioning of cottage industries in rural areas

714. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH:
SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI:

Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cottage industries at present functioning in the rural areas with the help of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC); and

(b) the details of those cottage industries and the number of persons engaged therein?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) 2,09,705 village industry units of seven categories (*viz.*, Polymer and chemical based industry, Food and Agro based industry, Forest based industry, Handmade paper and fibre industry, Mineral based industry, Rural engineering and bio-technology industry and Service industry) have been set up under the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) upto 31 March, 2005 since its inception in April, 1995. The REGP is implemented by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, with the assistance of State Khadi and Village Industries Boards and Banks. The employment generated under the REGP during the above-mentioned period is 28.05 lakh.

Assistance to khadi units under REGP

715. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that khadi units are not eligible for assistance under the REGP;

(b) if so, the reasons for not covering khadi units under REGP; and

(c) the other means of financial assistance provided to khadi units in the country with particularly reference to Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Khadi units are not eligible for assistance under the Rural Employment Generation Programme, implemented by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), as funds for promotion and development of khadi throughout the country, including Andhra Pradesh, are provided separately by the Government to the KVIC out of the Central budget.

Multinational companies into business of Agro-based industries

716. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of multinational companies have entered into business of Agro-based industries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the domestic Agro-based industries have been adversely affected due to the entry of Multinational companies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Under the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy of the Government, some multinational companies have set up agro-based industries. These include companies like Nestle, Pepsi, Heinz, Kellogs, etc.

(c) and (d) The entry of these companies has led to increase in competitiveness and investment and improvement in product quality. Government implements the following schemes for the promotion and modernisation of the food processing industries in the country:

(i) Financial assistance for establishment, expansion and modernisation of food processing units.